

Year	No. of Accidents	No. of Casualties
2002	81	97
2003	83	113
2004	87	96
2005	99	120
2006	78	137

Note: Data for year 2005 and 2006 are provisional.

(c) and (d) All fatal accidents are enquired into by the Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS) under the Ministry of Labours & Employment which is a statutory body for administration of statutes relating to safety in mines under the Mines Act, 1952 and regulations framed thereunder. The persons found guilty are prosecuted by the DGMS.

In cases of major accidents, where the Central Government is of the opinion that a formal enquiry into the causes and circumstances attending the accident ought to be held, it may appoint a competent person to hold such enquiry under Section 24 of the Mines Act, 1952. In the last 5 years such Courts of Inquiry were appointed in case of four major coal mine accidents. Out of which reports of two cases *i.e.* GDK-7(LEP) of Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCC1) and Central Saunda Colliery of Central Coalfields Limited (CCL) have been published. On the basis of findings of the enquiry reports, DGMS has prosecuted six officials of SCCL in case of GDK-7(LEP) and has launched prosecution against five officials of CCL found responsible in case of Central Saunda Colliery mine accident.

Allocation of Lignite Blocks

†271. SHRI LALIT KISHROE CHATURVEDI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for which Government propose to make changes in the present process of allocation of Lignite blocks;

(b) whether the State Governments could utilize the mineral resources

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

available in their States on the basis of priority under the powers given to them by Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957;

(c) the reasons for which Governments propose to deprive the States of these powers; and

(d) whether Government are prepared to pay 75 per cent Production Linked Payment (PLP) to the States if bidding process is implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO): (a) In order to make the system of allocation more transparent and objective in the context of increasing number of applications and declining number of coal and lignite blocks.

(b) and (c) Under the existing provisions of the Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957, prior approval of the Central Government is necessary before the State Government can grant mining lease in respect of coal, lignite and other minerals included in the First Schedule of the said Act.

(d) No final view has yet been taken in the matter.

Import of coal

272. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that our country is having a huge reserve of coal in various places;

(b) if so, the reasons for importing coal;

(c) the details of import of coal including the place from which imported right from the date of assumption of office by UPA Government, year-wise; and

(d) the mechanism to compare in terms of price and quality of coal between the indigenous and that of imported coal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO): (a) As per the estimates of Geological Survey of India (GSI), as on 1.1.2007 a total of 255172 million tonnes of geological resources of coal has so far been estimated in India. This comprises